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A Crucial Piece of Advice!

We find several students discussing the issue of lack of time and digging out content regarding how to use every second of your time efficiently. Some of you must be thinking, we have 86400 seconds each day, so why should we worry about just a single one? **Does a single second hold that much importance? YES!** When it comes to competition, each & every second is very crucial.

The first question that might come to your mind is “Is that even possible to use each second of your time effectively?” or “Do I even have that much spare time?” Let's help you by looking over the top time drainers of your daily routine:

- On an average, a person spends 67 minutes per day eating and drinking beverages while watching their favorite TV series.
- Travelling is one of the most overlooked time drainers. CNBC claims that the average commute is a little over 50 minutes per day.
- 44% of people waste tons of time just sitting in the traffic, while others keep scrolling through their feeds.
- Digital Information World suggests that people spend 2 hours and 22 minutes on social media.
- More often unproductive chats on WhatsApp are the major time drainers where you waste your time on without even knowing how much time is spent.

Adding up all these, you spend nearly **4 hours** daily or 1/6th of your day doing a whole lot of **NOTHING!** Over the course of a week that amounts to over **28 hours** of wasted time, and more than **1460 hours** or **52,560,000 seconds** annually!! Scary! Isn't it?

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National & States Affairs

451. On January 19, L&T Technology Services (LTTS) has been selected as a strategic engineering partner to Airbus for providing Advanced Engineering Capabilities and Digital Manufacturing Services under a multi-year contract. Under this agreement, LTTS will support Airbus in key verticals and technology areas for its ongoing Commercial and Innovation programs. LTTS is also a part of the industry-leading 'Skywise Partner Program', and earlier in 2022, was recognized as a Global Strategic Engineering Supplier under the Airbus EMES3 (Engineering, Manufacturing Engineering and Services Strategic Suppliers) program. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- L&T Technology Services – selected as a strategic engineering partner to Airbus
- LTTS is also a part of 'Skywise Partner Program' of Airbus
- HQs of Airbus – Leiden, Netherlands | CEO – Guillaume Faury

452. On January 24, the occasion of National Girl Child Day and Cervical Cancer Awareness Month (January), the Serum Institute of India (SII) launched the first indigenously developed human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV), "CERVAVAC", against the cervical cancer in women. It was launched by the hands of Home Minister Amit Shah. The vaccine has jointly been created by the SII and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer in women after breast, lung, and colorectal cancer, with the country accounting for nearly one-fourth of the world's cervical cancer deaths. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- SII – launched the first indigenously developed vaccine against the cervical cancer in women, named "CERVAVAC"
- The vaccine has jointly been created by = SII + Department of Biotechnology
- HQs of SII – Pune, Maharashtra | Chairman – Cyrus S. Poonawalla | CEO – Adar C. Poonawalla | Founded in – 1966

453. On January 21, Tamil Nadu government will set up a ₹6.30 Crore 'Turtle Conservation and Rehabilitation Centre' at the Guindy National Park in Chennai to boost its conservation efforts. Turtles are facing severe threats due to increasing biotic pressure. A rescue and treatment centre will be set up for injured turtles to rehabilitate them back to the sea after recovery. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Tamil Nadu – to set up a 'Turtle Conservation and Rehabilitation Centre' at Guindy National Park in Chennai
- Tamil Nadu: Capital – Chennai | CM – Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin | Governor – Ravindra Narayan Ravi

454. The cultivation of mangroves is different from agriculture and hence would not be exempted from the Goods and Services Tax (GST), according to the Appellate Authority for Advance Rulings (AAAR). It upheld the order of the West Bengal Authority of Advance Ruling (AAR) and said mangrove cultivation would attract 18% GST. The GST on various products and services are based on their classification in the Harmonised System of Nomenclature (HSN) codes. The applicant had said his activities should come under 9986 heading, which covers activities that support agriculture. The applicant had said his activities should come under 9986 heading, which covers activities that support agriculture. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- According to AAAR:
 - Cultivation of mangroves is different from agriculture & hence would not be exempted from the GST
 - Mangrove cultivation would attract 18% GST
- HSN codes – **H**armonised **S**ystem of **N**omenclature



455. On January 23, the Indian Government has launched “U-WIN” to digitise India’s universal immunisation programme. The U-WIN is going to be the single source of information for immunisation services, updating vaccination status, delivery outcome, planning of RI sessions and reports like antigen-wise coverage, etc. The programme to digitise India’s Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) has been launched in a pilot mode in two districts of each state and Union Territory. The platform replicates Co-WIN which has served as the digital backbone for India’s COVID-19 vaccination programme. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Government launched “U-WIN” to digitise India’s universal immunisation programme
- The platform replicates ‘Co-WIN’

International Affairs

456. On January 25, Germany agreed to provide Ukraine with ‘Leopard 2’ battle tanks. The Leopard 2 is a 3rd-generation German main battle tank. Developed by Krauss-Maffei in the 1970s, the tank entered service in 1979 and replaced the earlier Leopard 1 as the main battle tank of the West German army. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Germany – agreed to provide Ukraine with ‘Leopard 2’ battle tanks
- Germany – Berlin – Euro | President – Frank-Walter Steinmeier
- Ukraine – Kyiv – Ukrainian Hryvnia | President – Volodymyr Zelensky

457. On January 20, External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar, during his official visit to Sri Lanka, said India will stand by Sri Lanka in its hour of need to overcome the challenges it currently faces. India has extended financing assurances to Sri Lanka for getting a \$2.9 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). With this announcement, India has become the first creditor nation to extend assurance towards restructuring the debt of Sri Lanka. Moreover, Sri Lanka thanked India for the generous support of a USD 3.9 billion credit line in 2022. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- India – extended financing assurances to Sri Lanka for getting a \$2.9 billion loan from the IMF
- India – became the first creditor nation to extend assurance towards restructuring the debt of Sri Lanka
- Sri Lanka – Colombo/Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte – Sri Lankan Rupee
- PM – Dinesh Gunawardena | President – Ranil Wickremesinghe

Banking, Finance, Insurance & Economic Affairs

458. On January 24, JPMorgan Chase & Co. has received approval from the RBI to appoint Prabdev D. Singh as the CEO of JP Morgan Chase Bank India for a period of 3 years. Singh had been JPMorgan’s interim CEO since November 2022, replacing Madhav Kalyan. JPMorgan, which started commercial banking operations in India about 15 years ago, has 4 commercial bank branches in the country. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Prabdev D. Singh – appointed as the CEO of JP Morgan Chase Bank India for a period of 3 years
- HQs of JP Morgan Chase Bank India – Mumbai | CEO – Prabdev D. Singh
- HQs of JPMorgan Chase & Co. – New York, US | President – Daniel E. Pinto

459. On January 23, as part of an initiative to develop bond markets, the SEBI organised an outreach programme on municipal bonds and municipal finance. The two-day event saw participants representing all stakeholders including the ministry of housing and urban affairs, municipal corporations, stock exchanges, credit rating agencies, merchant bankers, debenture trustees, lawyers, NGOs and institutional investors. To assist municipal debt issuers and other stakeholders in the municipal debt market, SEBI Whole-Time Member Ashwani Bhatia launched an 'Information Database' including a repository of information pertaining to municipal bonds on its website. The information database can also be accessed by way of a QR Code. SEBI, in 2015, introduced a regulatory framework for the issue, listing and trading of municipal debt securities; the same was further reviewed by SEBI in 2019. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- SEBI – organised an outreach programme on municipal bonds and municipal finance
- SEBI Whole-Time Member Ashwani Bhatia – launched an 'Information Database' for municipal bonds
- SEBI introduced a regulatory framework for the issue, listing and trading of municipal debt securities in 2015
- HQs of SEBI – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Chairman – Madhabi Puri Buch | Established in – 1992

460. On January 23, Tata Motors partnered with ICICI Bank to offer financing solutions to its authorised passenger electric vehicle dealers. Under the partnership, ICICI Bank will provide inventory funding to the authorised passenger EV dealers in addition to the bank's funding to dealers for diesel and petrol models. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Tata Motors + ICICI Bank = partnership to offer financing solutions to its authorised passenger electric vehicle dealers
- HQs of Tata Motors – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Non-Executive Director & Chairman – Natarajan Chandrasekaran
- HQs of ICICI Bank – Mumbai | MD & CEO – Sandeep Bakhshi | Taglines – “Hum Hain Na!” & “Khayal Apka”

461. On January 26, National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) has acquired its first stressed asset, Jaypee Infratech, from lenders. It acquired their exposure aggregating about Rs 9,200 Crore at a 55% haircut. IDBI Bank, with an exposure of ₹3,750 crore, received ₹253 crore in cash and ₹1,434.5 crore in the form of security receipts. NARCL, which was set up by banks last year, is aggregating and consolidating select stressed assets (above ₹500 crore each) in the financial system for their subsequent resolution. Along with NARCL, India Debt Resolution Company Ltd (IDRCL), has been floated for resolving these stressed assets. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- NARCL acquired its first stressed asset 'Jaypee Infratech' from IDBI Bank
- Total exposure of all the banks to Jaypee Infratech – Rs 9,000 Cr | IDBI Bank's exposure – Rs 3,750 Cr
- MD & CEO of NARCL – Natarajan Sundar | Lead Sponsor – Canara Bank (12% equity)
- HQs of IDBI Bank – Mumbai, MH | MD & CEO – Rakesh Sharma | Established in – 1964



462. On January 23, Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) Ltd plans to raise at least Rs 30 billion (\$370.5 million) through the sale of bonds maturing in 10 years. The housing finance company has invited coupon and commitment bids from bankers and investors. The issue will also have a greenshoe option to retain an additional Rs 20 billion. The bonds are rated AAA by CRISIL and will have a put option at the end of the third year. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- HDFC Ltd – plans to raise at least Rs 30 billion (\$370.5 million) through the sale of bonds maturing in 10 years
- The bonds are rated ‘AAA’ by CRISIL
- HQs of HDFC Ltd – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Chairman – Deepak Parekh | VC & CEO – Keki Mistry

463. On January 24, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the deadline for banks to finish the process of renewing agreements for existing Safe Deposit Locker holders (customers) in a phased manner by December 31, 2023 (from January 1, 2023 earlier). By April 30, 2023, banks are advised to inform all their clients of the amended requirements. By June 30 and September 30, 2023, banks should make sure that at least 50% and 75% of their current customers have signed the revised agreements. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- RBI – extended the deadline for banks to finish the process of renewing agreements for existing Safe Deposit Locker holders by Dec 31, 2023
- HQs of RBI – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Governor – Shaktikanta Das (25th) | Established on – 1st April, 1935
- Total Deputy Governors (4) – Mahesh Kumar Jain | T. Rabi Sankar | Michael D. Patra | M. Rajeshwar Rao

464. On January 23, AU Small Finance Bank launched a first-of-its-kind ‘SwipeUp’ platform that will allow credit cardholders of any bank to get an upgraded card instantly. SwipeUp platform will allow other bank credit cardholders to compare existing credit cards within 2-3 seconds. Thereafter, they can upgrade to a new card with an enhanced credit limit, cashback and reward points matching their lifestyles within minutes. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- AU Small Finance Bank – launched a first-of-its-kind ‘SwipeUp’ platform that will allow credit cardholders of any bank to get an upgraded card instantly
- HQs of AU SFB – Jaipur, Rajasthan | MD & CEO – Sanjay Agarwal

465. On January 24, in exercise of its powers under sections 35A and 36(1)(a) of the ‘Banking Regulation Act, 1949’, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed SBM Bank (India) Ltd to stop all transactions under Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS). Under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme, Indian residents, including minors, are allowed to freely remit up to USD 2,50,000 per financial year (April-March) for any permissible current or capital account transaction or a combination of both. The scheme was introduced in 2004. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- RBI – directed SBM Bank (India) Ltd to stop all transactions under Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)
- Under the LRS, Indian residents are allowed to freely remit up to USD 2,50,000 per financial year
- The LRS was introduced in 2004
- HQs of RBI – Mumbai, Maharashtra | Governor – Shaktikanta Das (25th) | Established on – 1st April, 1935
- Total Deputy Governors (4) – Mahesh Kumar Jain | T. Rabi Sankar | Michael D. Patra | M. Rajeshwar Rao



466. As of January 2023, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), which was launched in July 2020, has mobilised over Rs 30,000 Crore for taking up projects related to creation of post-harvest management facilities. The AIF is a financing facility for creation of post-harvest management infrastructure and community farm assets. Under this scheme, Rs 1 Lakh Crore is to be disbursed by financial year 2025-26 and the interest subvention and credit guarantee assistance will be given till the year 2032-33. Within two-and-a-half years of the implementation of the AIF, the scheme has mobilised more than Rs 30,000 crore with a sanctioned amount of Rs 15,000 Crore under AIF. The AIF is providing financial support to the farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, farmer groups like Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Joint Liability Groups. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- AIF mobilised over Rs 30,000 Cr for taking up projects related to creation of post-harvest management facilities
- AIF was launched in July 2020 | Under this scheme, Rs 1 Lakh Cr is to be disbursed by financial year 2025-26

Defence Affairs

467. On January 21, as tensions between India and China along the Line of Actual Control in Arunachal Pradesh have recently risen, the Indian Air Force (IAF) will conduct a massive exercise named “Poorvi Aakash” covering the Northeastern region in February to assess its combat readiness. The annual Command-level exercise will be conducted by Eastern Air Command. The exercise is expected to involve every frontline air base in the Northeast as well as some significant Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs). [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Eastern Air Command of IAF – to conduct annual Command-level exercise named “Poorvi Aakash” in NE region (in Feb)
- HQs of Eastern Air Command – Shillong, Meghalaya | AOC-in-Chief – Air Marshal Sujeet Pushpakar Dharkar

468. In January 2023, the Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out “Exercise Pralay” involving all its major air bases in the northeast amid the ongoing standoff with China. According to officials, the exercise saw major combat assets of the Air Force including the Rafale and Su-30 fighter jets activated along with the transport and other aircraft. This was the second such command-level exercise carried out by the IAF in recent months. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- IAF – carried out “Exercise Pralay” involving all its major air bases in the Northeast
- HQs of IAF – New Delhi | Chief – Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari | Vice Chief – Air Marshal Sandeep Singh

469. From January 21 to 28, the Border Security Force (BSF) conducted an “Ops Alert” exercise to enhance security along the India-Pakistan border in Kutch district of Gujarat and Barmer in Rajasthan in view of the Republic Day celebrations. It was carried out to thwart any ill designs of anti-national elements during the Republic Day celebrations. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- BSF – conducted “Ops Alert” exercise along the India-Pakistan border in Kutch (Gujarat) & Barmer (Rajasthan)
- It was carried to enhance security during the Republic Day celebrations
- HQs of BSF – New Delhi | DG – Sujoy Lal Thaisen (addi.) | Established on – Dec 1, 1965 | Motto – “Duty Unto Death”



470. On January 21, in an important step that will significantly enhance the endurance of the Scorpene-class conventional submarines of the Indian Navy, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Naval Group of France have signed an agreement to fit the indigenous fuel cell-based Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system on INS Kalvari. The AIP has been developed by DRDO's Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL). Six Scorpene submarines are being built under Project-75 by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) under technology transfer from Naval Group of France under a \$3.75 billion deal signed in October 2005. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- DRDO + Naval Group of France = an agreement to fit the indigenous fuel cell-based Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system on INS Kalvari
- INS Kalvari – built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders + Naval Group (France)
- The 6 submarines being commissioned under the Indian Navy's Project-75 are:
 - 1st – Kalvari | 2nd – Khanderi | 3rd – Karanj | 4th – Vela | 5th – Vagir | 6th – Vagsheer
- HQs of DRDO – New Delhi | Chairman – Samir V. Kamat | Established in – 1958

Sports & Games

471. In January 2023, Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn and Korea's An Se-young emerged champions at the 'India Open Badminton Championship 2023' or 'Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2023' held at KD Jadhav Indoor Stadium in New Delhi. They defeated Denmark's Viktor Axelsen & Japan's Akane Yamaguchi, respectively. Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang came out as the winners in men's doubles. Japan's Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino won the mixed doubles title, while Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida, also from Japan, claimed the women's doubles crown. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- "India Open Badminton Championships 2023" or "Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2023" – held in New Delhi
- Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Thailand) – won Men's Singles title
- An Se-young (South Korea) – won Women's Singles title
- Liang Wei Keng & Wang Chang (China) – won Men's Doubles title
- Nami Matsuyama & Chiharu Shida (Japan) – won Women's Doubles title
- Yuta Watanabe & Arisa Higashino (Japan) – won Mixed Doubles title

472. On January 23, 'Ironman of India' Sabir Ali, who won the decathlon gold at the '1981 Asian Athletics Championships' in Tokyo, passed away in New Delhi following a cardiac arrest. He was 67. Ali, who retired from Railways, won the title in the Japanese capital with a tally of 7,253 points beating Japan's Nobuya Saito (7,078) and China's Zu Qilin (7,074). He also won two silver medals at the South Asian Federation Games held in Kathmandu and Dhaka. Ali won 8 consecutive Open National titles in the gruelling event between 1979 and 1985. The decathlon is a combined event in athletics consisting of ten track and field events. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Sabir Ali ('Ironman of India') – a decathlon Player – passed away
- He won the decathlon gold at the '1981 Asian Athletics Championships' in Tokyo, Japan

473. On January 20, Delhi High Court has appointed retired Supreme Court judge Arjan Kumar Sikri (A. K. Sikri) as Administrator to oversee the utilisation of funds for the ISSF World Cup to be held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh in March 2023. The court also allowed release of money by the Centre to the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) to be used for the event. The Administrator can also take the assistance of any sportsperson of his choice, who has been a national or international shooter, to assist him in the matter. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- A. K. Sikri – appointed as Administrator to oversee the utilisation of funds for the 'ISSF World Cup 2023'
- India will host the 'ISSF World Cup 2023' in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (in March)
- [Madhya Pradesh: Capital – Bhopal](#) | [CM – Shivraj Singh Chouhan](#) | [Governor – Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel](#)

474. On January 25, the International Cricket Council (ICC) revealed its first individual award winners in the "ICC Awards 2022", naming the stars honoured in the Associate, Emerging and T20I categories. Winners in the 13 individual categories were based on overall performances and achievements throughout the calendar year. India's Suryakumar Yadav claimed the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year award, and Australia's Tahlia McGrath named the ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year. India's Renuka Singh claimed the ICC Women's Emerging Cricketer of the Year and South Africa's Marco Jansen won the ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year award. Namibia's Gerhard Erasmus claimed the ICC Men's Associate Cricketer of the Year award, and the UAE's Esha Oza secured the ICC Women's Associate Cricketer of the Year award. Moreover, other awards are mentioned below. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- "ICC Awards 2022":
- Cricketers of the Year: Men's – Babar Azam (Pakistan) | Women's – Nat Sciver (England)
- T20I Cricketers of the Year: Men's – Suryakumar Yadav (India) | Women's – Tahlia McGrath (Australia)
- ODI Cricketers of the Year: Men's – Babar Azam (Pakistan) | Women's – Nat Sciver (England)
- Emerging Cricketers of the Year: Men's – Marco Jansen (South Africa) | Women's – Renuka Singh (India)
- Associate Cricketers of the Year: Men's – Gerhard Erasmus (Namibia) | Women's – Esha Oza (UAE)
- Umpire of the Year: Richard Illingworth (England)
- Spirit of Cricket: Aasif Sheikh (Nepal)

475. On January 24, Indian skipper Harmanpreet Kaur has been named the captain of the 'ICC Women's ODI Team of the Year 2022' that also includes her teammates, opener Smriti Mandhana and fast bowler Renuka Singh. Other players in the ICC Women's T20I team of the year 2022 are - Alyssa Healy (Australia), Laura Wolvaardt (South Africa), Nat Sciver (England), Beth Mooney (Australia), Amelia Kerr (New Zealand), Sophie Ecclestone (England), Ayabonga Khaka (South Africa), Shabnim Ismail (South Africa). [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Harmanpreet Kaur – named the captain of the 'ICC Women's ODI Team of the Year 2022'
- The team also included her teammates Smriti Mandhana & Renuka Singh
- [HQs of ICC – Dubai, UAE](#) | [Chairman – Greg Barclay](#) | [CEO – Geoff Allardice](#) | [Members – 108 countries](#)





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Persons in News

476. On January 23, Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur announced that six-time World champion and Olympic medallist boxer M.C. Mary Kom will head a government-appointed 5-member Oversight Committee to investigate the sexual harassment charges levelled by some prominent wrestlers against Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The panel will probe the allegations of sexual misconduct, harassment and intimidation, financial irregularities and administrative lapses. Mary Kom and Yogeshwar Dutt are also part of a seven-member committee formed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to look into the wrestlers' allegations. Mary Kom heads the IOA panel as well. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Government formed a 5-member Oversight Committee to investigate the charges against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh
- The committee will be headed by – M.C. Mary Kom
- HQs of WFI – New Delhi

Science & Technology

477. On January 21, to explore the moons of Jupiter, European Union announced to launch its "JUICE" (Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer) Spacecraft in April 2023. The spacecraft is developed by the European Space Agency with Airbus Defence and Space as the main contractor. The final testing of Juice satellite will take place in Toulouse in France. Subsequently, the satellite will be shipped to South America. The spacecraft will make a series of flybys of Jupiter's planet-sized moons - Callisto, Ganymede and Europa. The objective is to ascertain whether Callisto, Ganymede and Europa are habitable or not. Juice satellite will undertake a journey of 6.6 billion kilometre that will last 8.5 years. It will reach Jupiter in July, 2031. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- EU – to launch its "JUICE" (Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer) Spacecraft in April 2023 to explore the moons of Jupiter
- The objective is to ascertain whether Jupiter's moon - Callisto, Ganymede and Europa are habitable or not
- The spacecraft is developed by = European Space Agency + Airbus Defence & Space
- HQs of EU – Brussels, Belgium | Member Countries – 27
- President of European Parliament – Roberta Metsola
- President of European Council – Charles Michel
- President of European Commission – Ursula von der Leyen

478. On January 22, the United States and Israel signed an agreement that would see NASA contributing to an upcoming Israeli astrophysics mission called "ULTRASAT". The Ultrasat is under development by Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science with support from the Israel Space Agency and German research center DESY. Ultrasat has a three-year prime mission. The spacecraft is scheduled for a launch in the first quarter of 2026. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- US + Israel = an agreement for the upcoming Israeli astrophysics mission called “ULTRASAT” (to be launched in 2026)
- ‘ULTRASAT’ is being built by = Weizmann Institute of Science (Israel) + DESY (Germany)
- US – Washington, D.C. – US Dollar | 46th President – Joe Biden | 49th VP – Kamala Harris
- Israel – Jerusalem – Israeli Shekel | President – Isaac Herzog | PM – Benjamin Netanyahu

Appointments & Resignations

479. On January 21, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved the appointment of Vikram Dev Dutt as the next Director General of the Directorate of General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). He will take over as the head of the aviation regulator on February 28, 2023. He will be succeeding the incumbent DGCA chief Arun Kumar. Kumar, a 1989-batch IAS officer, was leading the DGCA as its director general since July 2019. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Vikram Dev Dutt – appointed as the next Director General of the Directorate of General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)
- HQs of DGCA – New Delhi | Director General – Arun Kumar (From Feb 28 - Vikram Dev Dutt)

480. On January 24, the government has extended the tenure of Sangeeta Verma as the acting Chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI). Ms. Verma has been the acting Chairperson of the anti-trust regulator since October 2022 after Ashok Kumar Gupta demitted office as the full-time Chairperson. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Sangeeta Verma – tenure extended as the acting Chairperson of the Competition Commission of India
- HQs of CCI – New Delhi | Chairperson – Sangeeta Verma | Established in – 2003

481. On January 21, Justice Sabina, the senior-most judge of the Himachal Pradesh High Court, was appointed its acting Chief Justice. She assumed charge on January 21 following the retirement of Justice Amjad Ahtesham Sayed, Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court. Justice Sayed demits office on attaining the age of 62 years. In exercise of the power conferred by ‘Article 223’ of the Constitution of India, the President appoints the Chief Justice of any High Court. This is Justice Sabina’s second term as an acting Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh HC. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Justice Sabina – appointed as acting Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court (succeeding - Amjad Ahtesham Sayed)
- Retirement age: Chief Justices & Judges of HC – 62 years | Chief Justice of India & judges of the SC – 65 years

Awards, Rewards, Recognition & Prizes

482. On January 22, Hindustani vocalist Padma Vibhushan Dr. Prabha Atre was conferred with the “Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia Lifetime Achievement Award” by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Mr. Shinde presented Dr. Atre with a citation and ₹1 lakh at the programme, during which a symphony of 90 flautists was performed to mark her 90th birthday. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Dr. Prabha Atre (Hindustani vocalist) – conferred with the “Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia Lifetime Achievement Award”
- She was awarded by Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde

483. On January 23, President of India, Droupadi Murmu, conferred the “Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2023” to 11 selected children in an award ceremony at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The awards are conferred upon children in the age group of 5-18 years. These awards are given to selected students for their excellence in 6 categories - art and culture, bravery, innovation, scholastic, social service and sports. In this award ceremony, each awardee was given a medal, a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh and a certificate. The 2023 awardees were from 11 states/UTs, including 6 boys and 5 girls. The 11 awardees were Aadithya Suresh (Kerala), Shreya Bhattacharjee (Assam), Aditya Pratap Singh Chauhan (Chhattisgarh), Sambhab Mishra (Odisha), M Gauravi Reddy (Telangana), Shauryajit Ranjitkumar Khaire (Gujarat), Rishi Shiv Prasanna (Karnataka), Hanaya Nisar (Jammu & Kashmir), Kolagatla Alana Meenakshi (Andhra Pradesh), Rohan Ramchandra Bahir (Maharashtra) and Anoushka Jolly (New Delhi). [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Droupadi Murmu – conferred the “Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2023” to 11 children (6 boys + 5 girls)
- Children’s age group – 5-18 years | 6 categories – art & culture, bravery, innovation, scholastic, social service & sports

434. On January 23, Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) and Lunglei Fire Station (LFS), Mizoram, both in the Institutional category, have been selected for the “Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar-2023” for their excellent work in Disaster Management. The award is announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash prize of Rs 51 lakh and a certificate in case of an institution and Rs 5 lakh and a certificate in case of an individual. For the award of year-2023, 274 valid nominations were received from institutions and individuals. The award, in Individual category, is yet to be announced. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- January 23, 2023 – 126th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose
- “Subhas Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for 2023” in Institutional Category:
 - Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA)
 - Lunglei Fire Station (LFS), Mizoram

485. On January 21, Aska Police Station in Ganjam district was awarded as the “Best Police Station in India” by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. IIC Prashant Kumar Sahoo received the trophy of the best police station from Shah at the DGP/IGP conference in New Delhi. Ranking of police stations is an annual exercise conducted by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the stations are judged on the basis of 165 different parameters like crime rate, investigation and disposal of cases, infrastructure and delivery of public service. Aska police station bagged the first spot in overall performance till December 26, 2022 after Pragati dashboard (developed by the State Crime Records Bureau) was introduced to rank police stations on their performances. [{Read more}](#)

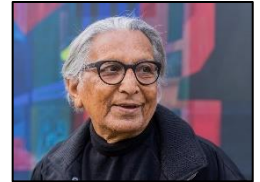


Smart Points:

- Aska Police Station (Odisha) – awarded as the “Best Police Station in India” by Union Home Minister Amit Shah
- ‘Pragati dashboard’ is developed by the State Crime Records Bureau – to rank police stations on their performances
- Odisha: Capital – Bhubaneswar | CM – Naveen Patnaik | Governor – Ganeshi Lal

Obituaries

486. On January 24, Renowned architect Balkrishna Vitaldas Doshi passed away at the age of 95. Doshi was the first Indian architect to be awarded the Pritzker Prize. He was also awarded the Royal Institute of British Architects’ Royal Gold Medal in 2022. Earlier, he had also received Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- B. V. Doshi – a Renowned Architect – passed away
- Awards: Royal Gold Medal (2022), Padma Bhushan, Padma Shri, Pritzker Prize (first Indian to receive this)

487. On January 21, former Vice Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Harjeet Singh Arora passed away at the age of 61. Air Marshal Harjeet Singh Arora (Retd.) superannuated on June 30, 2021. He was succeeded by Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari. He was awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in January 2011 and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal in January 2020. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- Air Marshal Harjeet Singh Arora – Former Vice Chief of Air Staff – passed away
- He was succeeded by Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari
- HQs of IAF – New Delhi | Chief – Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari | Vice Chief – Air Marshal Sandeep Singh



Meetings, Conferences & Summits

488. On January 21, India's Civil 20 Engagement Group (C20), the official engagement group of the country's G20 leadership, has been inaugurated at Amritapuri in Kerala's Kollam district. Sri Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma) serves as Chair of C20. On the occasion, Amma initiated a Rs 50 Crore project by the Mata Amritanandamayi Math to support the welfare of pregnant women who are malnourished and people with disabilities in underdeveloped districts across India and other developing nations. Members of India's C20 include Sri M, the Satsang Foundation as Participant; Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini as Secretariat; and the Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari as Institutional Partner. C20's purpose is to bring the concerns of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from around the world to the G20 Summit set to take place in New Delhi in September, 2023. [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- India's Civil 20 Engagement Group (C20) – inaugurated at Amritapuri, Kollam, Kerala
- Chair of C20 – Sri Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)
- Presidency of G20 Summit: 2023 – India (Dec 1, 2022 to Nov 30, 2023) | 2024 – Brazil
- India's G20 motto – 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' | Theme – 'One Earth One Family One Future' | Sherpa – Amitabh Kant

489. India is hosting the 'Youth 20 (Y20) Summit' for the first time on the sidelines of the G20 summit. The first meeting of the Y20 Group shall be held in Guwahati, Assam from February 6-8, 2023. This is the first of the various meetings to be held on the five Y20 themes across India in a run-up to the final Youth-20 Summit in August 2023. Five themes include - Future of Work; Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction; Peace Building and Reconciliation; Youth in Democracy and Health, Wellbeing and Sports. Youth20 is one of the 8 official engagement groups under the G20 umbrella. Other groups include - Business community (B20), Civil society (C20), Labor unions (L20), Scientists (S20), Think tanks (T20), Urban cities (U20), and Women (W20). [{Read more}](#)



Smart Points:

- The first meeting of the Y20 Group – to be held in Guwahati, Assam (in Feb 2023)
- 5 Themes Y20:
 - Future of Work
 - Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
 - Peace Building and Reconciliation
 - Youth in Democracy and Health
 - Wellbeing and Sports
- 8 official engagement groups under G20 – B20, C20, L20, S20, T20, U20, W20, Y20
- The final Youth-20 Summit – to be held in August 2023



490. The first meeting of the Environment, Climate & Sustainability Working Group (ECSWG) under the Sherpa Track of G20 was scheduled to be held in Bengaluru from February 9-11, 2023. Total 4 Meetings of the ECSWG are scheduled to be hosted by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) during India's G20 presidency which ends on November 30, 2023. The discussions at ECSWG focused on the agenda 'Promotion of Blue Economy along with Coastal Sustainability', 'Restoration of Degraded Lands and Ecosystems' and 'Enhancement of Biodiversity' and 'Strengthening of Circular Economy'. Moreover, the Geo-Spatial Forest Information System developed by the Karnataka Forest Department is a unique platform which uses Remote Sensing and GIS technology and provides spatial database of all notified forest lands in the state. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- 1st meeting of the 'Environment, Climate & Sustainability Working Group' – held in Bengaluru, Karnataka
- Karnataka Forest Department – developed the 'Geo-Spatial Forest Information System'
- Presidency of G20 Summit: 2023 – India (Dec 1, 2022 to Nov 30, 2023) | 2024 – Brazil
- India's G20 motto – 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' | Theme – 'One Earth One Family One Future' | Sherpa – Amitabh Kant

491. The Election Commission of India (ECI) hosted the 2nd International Conference on the theme "Use of Technology and Elections Integrity" at New Delhi on 23-24 January, 2023. ECI is leading the Cohort on Elections Integrity which was established as a follow up to the 'Summit for Democracy' held virtually in December, 2021. The first international conference of the Cohort was organized on 31 Oct-1 Nov, 2022 at New Delhi on the topic 'Role, Framework and Capacity of Election Management Bodies'. The two-day international conference was inaugurated by Chief Election Commissioner of India Shri Rajiv Kumar. 'Summit for Democracy', was an initiative of US President and hosted in December 2021. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- ECI – hosted the 2nd International Conference on the theme "Use of Technology and Elections Integrity" in New Delhi
- HQs of ECI – New Delhi | Chief Election Commissioner – Rajiv Kumar (25th) | Formed on – 25th Jan, 1950
- Election Commissioners (2) – Anup Chandra Pandey & Arun Goel

Ranks, Reports & Surveys

492. To encourage tree plantation on farmland along with crops to help farmers get additional income, Bihar government in association with Forest Survey of India (FSI) has decided to conduct "Trees Outside Forest (TOF) Field Survey" to identify the dominant tree species that are growing outside the recorded forest areas (RFA) in the state. As per the Forest Survey of India (FSI) "India state of Forest Report, 2021", Bihar has registered an increase of 3.79% in growing stock in RFA and 0.58% in TOF, respectively. The survey, which will be completed in two months, will cover all 38 districts. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Bihar + FSI = to conduct "Trees Outside Forest (TOF) Field Survey" to identify the dominant tree species
- Bihar: Capital – Patna | CM – Nitish Kumar | Governor – Phagu Chauhan
- HQs of FSI – Dehradun, Uttarakhand | DG – Anoop Singh



493. On January 23, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani announced that the World Economic Forum (WEF) has recognised the need to include women's participation in local government bodies in its Gender Gap Report. The World Economic Forum (WEF) ranked India at 135 out of 146 countries in its Global Gender Gap (GGG) Index for 2022. The WEF's gender gap report is based on four parameters - economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- WEF – recognised the need to include women's participation in local government bodies in its 'Gender Gap Report'
- India ranked 135th in the 'Global Gender Gap (GGG) Index for 2022' released by the WEF
- HQs of WEF – [Cologne, Switzerland](#) | [Exe Chairman – Klaus Schwab](#) | [President – Borge Brende](#) | [Founded in – 1971](#)

494. On January 26, India has emerged as one of the top three countries in the world where the area under organic agriculture expanded the maximum in 2020, according to IFOAM-Organics International data. The total increase under organic cultivation globally in 2020 was 3 million hectares (mh), out of which Argentina accounted for 7,81,000 hectares, followed by Uruguay at 5,89,000 hectares and India at 3,59,000 hectares. Of the world's total 74.9 mh under organic farming, Australia has the highest at 35.7 mh, whereas India has 2.8 mh. The Cabinet is yet to approve Agriculture Ministry's Rs 2,481 Crore proposal to launch the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF). The mission is supposed to be implemented from the current fiscal until 2025-26. Under the scheme, farmers will get a maximum of ₹15,000/hectare (until 2025-26) depending on loss in income, if any, after switching over to natural farming. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- India – ranked 3rd in the world in terms of the area expanded under Organic Agriculture in 2020
- 1st – Argentina | 2nd – Uruguay
- Currently, Australia has the highest organic farming area at 35.7 million hectares (mh) | India has 2.8 mh

495. In January 2023, Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio is the strongest brand in India and ranked 9th among the world's strongest brands, according to the report titled "Global 500 - 2023" published by Brand Finance. This makes 'Jio' ahead of brands like EY, Coca Cola, Accenture and Porsche, and behind the likes of Google, YouTube, Deloitte and Instagram. With a 'Brand Strength Index' of 90.2, Jio is the only brand among the world's strongest 25 brands, according to the Brand Finance listing. Brand Strength Index, is primarily a quantitative analysis, where scores for the independent measures are informed by market research and financial data. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- "Global 500 - 2023" – published by Brand Finance
- Reliance Jio – is the strongest brand in India and ranked 9th among the world's strongest brands
- HQs of Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd – [Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra](#) | [Chairman – Akash Ambani](#)



Amount & Agreements

496. On January 23, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Nhava Sheva Freeport Terminal Private Limited (NSFTPL) have signed a USD 131 million (about ₹1,066 Crore) loan agreement to upgrade the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Container Terminal, Navi Mumbai, to enhance international trade in India through efficient, transparent, and state-of-the-art logistics infrastructure. NSFTPL is a special purpose vehicle jointly owned by J M Baxi Ports & Logistics Limited (JMBPL) and CMA Terminals. The financing package comprises \$61.4 million from ADB's ordinary capital resources and \$69.6 million from Leading Asia's Private Infrastructure Fund (LEAP) administered by ADB. The funds will be used to upgrade existing berths and yards and install additional energy efficient equipment such as electric quay cranes. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- ADB + Nhava Sheva Freeport Terminal = signed a \$131 million loan agreement to upgrade Jawaharlal Nehru Port Container Terminal, Navi Mumbai
- NSFTPL (a Seaport in Maharashtra) is owned by = J M Baxi Ports & Logistics Ltd + CMA Terminals
- HQs of ADB – Mandaluyong, Philippines | President – Masatsugu Asakawa | Members – 68 | Established in – 1966

Acquisitions & Mergers

497. On January 23, India Grid Trust (IndiGrid) will acquire a 100% stake in Khargone Transmission Ltd at an enterprise value of about Rs 1,497.5 Crore. The acquisition will be for a cash consideration of an enterprise value not exceeding Rs 1,497.5 Crore, according to a BSE filing. IndiGrid signed a share purchase agreement on January 21, 2023, for this acquisition. The Khargone Transmission was incorporated on November 28, 2015. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- IndiGrid – to acquire a 100% stake in Khargone Transmission Ltd (Madhya Pradesh)
- HQs of IndiGrid – Mumbai | CEO – Harsh Shah

MoUs, Collaborations & Partnerships

498. On January 23, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has partnered with Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL), under the aegis of Ministry of Defense, for creating an apprenticeship training framework. The move aims to address the need for skilled and future-ready workforce in the Central Public Sector Undertaking and Industries. Under the collaboration, more than 250 apprentices have been engaged in the BDL facility in Hyderabad where 'Astra' missile is manufactured. The apprentices will be provided on-the-job training in different sections in the facility. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- MSDE + BDL = partnership to create an 'Apprenticeship Training Framework'
- More than 250 apprentices are engaged in the BDL facility in Hyderabad where 'Astra' missile is manufactured
- HQs of BDL – Hyderabad, Telangana | CMD – Siddharth Mishra | Founded in – 1970
- Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship: Dharmendra Pradhan | Constituency – Madhya Pradesh
- MoS in Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship: Rajeev Chandrasekhar



499. On January 23, Ministry of AYUSH signed an MoU with India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), Ministry of Tourism to work together for the promotion of Medical Value Travel in Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine. The implementation and progress of the MoU will be monitored by a Joint Working Group (JWG) co-chaired by representatives from MoA and ITDC. The JWG will also identify the best practices adopted by Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand etc. to promote themselves as a preferred destination for medical value travel. According to the report 'The Global Wellness Economy: Looking beyond COVID' by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), the Global Wellness economy will grow at 9.9% annually. [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- Ministry of AYUSH + ITDC (Ministry of Tourism) = an MoU to promote Medical Value Travel in Ayurveda
- 'The Global Wellness Economy: Looking beyond COVID' – by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI)
- Global Wellness economy will grow at 9.9% annually
- HQs of ITDC – New Delhi | Chairman – Sambit Patra | Established in – October 1966
- Ministry of AYUSH: Sarbananda Sonowal | Constituency – Majuli, Assam
- MoS in Ministry of AYUSH: Munjapara Mahendrabhai
- Ministry of Tourism: G. Kishan Reddy | Constituency – Secunderabad, Telangana
- MoS in Ministry of Tourism: Shripad Yesso Naik & Ajay Bhatt

500. On January 24, Mobile phone brand OPPO India has partnered with CSC Academy for the “Cyber Sangini” program to empower women in rural and semi-urban areas by training them in the fundamentals of cybersecurity and cyber wellness. CSC Academy is the Education & CSR wing of Common Services Centres (CSC) under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY). Under this project, OPPO will support the training of 10,000 women all over India who will be known as ‘Cyber Sanginis’ and act as Cyber Security Ambassadors in their area. After completing a specially designed course over 45 days, these women will be provided with a certificate from CDAC or NIELIT, making them eligible for suitable employment opportunities or to start earning livelihood in their locality. CSC has planned to set up 7,000 CSC Academy centres (one in every block) across India with the main aim of providing education and skills. CSC Academy, setup in 2017, is a not-for-profit society under the Societies Registration Act 1860 (Act 21 of 1860). [{Read more}](#)

Smart Points:

- OPPO India + CSC Academy = partnership for “Cyber Sangini” program to empower women in rural & semi-urban areas
- CSC Academy – the Education & CSR wing of Common Services Centres (CSC) under MeitY
- Under this project, OPPO will support the training of 10,000 women all over India who will be known as ‘Cyber Sanginis’

Important Days	
January 1	65 th DRDO Day
January 8	Earth's Rotation Day
January 12	National Youth Day (birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda)
January 12	18 th Foundation Day of NCPCR
January 14	Armed Forces Veterans Day
January 15	148 th Foundation Day of Indian Meteorological Department
January 15	75 th Army Day (Commemorates the achievements of the first Indian Commander in Chief of Army - Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa)
January 16	Thiruvalluvar Day
January 10-16	Startup-India Innovation Week





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